

URINARY TRACT INFECTION (FEMALE)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

DESCRIPTION

Inflammation or infection of the urinary bladder and/or urethra.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Burning and stinging on urination.
- Frequent urination, although the urine amount may be small.
- Increased urge to urinate.
- Pain in the abdomen over the bladder.
- Low back pain.
- Blood in the urine.
- Bad-smelling urine.
- Painful sexual intercourse.
- Lack of urinary control (sometimes).

CAUSES

- Bacteria that reach the bladder from another part of the body through the blood stream.
- Bacteria that enter the urinary tract from skin around the genitals and anal area.
- Injury to the urethra.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Increased sexual activity. In women, the cause is often aggravated by friction over the urethra during intercourse.
- Infection in other parts of the genitourinary system
- Stress.
- Illness that has lowered resistance.
- Excess alcohol consumption.
- Wearing poorly ventilated underpants.
- Irritation from bath salts, bubble bath products or perfumed soaps.
- Loss of suspension of female organs as a result of childbirth or aging.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Drink a glass of water before sexual intercourse, and urinate within 15 minutes after intercourse.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine which irritates the bladder.
- Use a water-soluble lubricant such as K-Y Lubricating Jelly, during intercourse.

- Use female-superior or lateral positions in sexual intercourse to protect the female urethra from injury.
- Take showers instead of tub baths.
- Drink 8 glasses of water every day.
- Obtain prompt medical treatment for urinary tract infections.
- Do not douche. Avoid feminine hygiene sprays or deodorants.
- Clean the anal area thoroughly after bowel movements. Wipe from the front to the rear to avoid spreading fecal bacteria to the genital area.
- Urinate when you feel the urge.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Curable with prompt medical treatment.
Recurrence is common.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Inadequate treatment can cause chronic urinary tract infections, leading to kidney infection or failure.

GENERAL MEASURES

Diagnostic tests may include urinalysis. Treatment is usually with antibiotics. Warm baths may help relieve discomfort. Pouring a cup of warm water over genital area while urinating may help relieve burning and stinging.

MEDICATION

Antibiotics to fight infection. Urinary analgesics may be ordered for pain. Some of these may change the color of your urine and stain your clothing.

ACTIVITY & DIET

Avoid sexual intercourse until you have been free of symptoms and medication is completed. Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water daily. Avoid caffeine and alcohol during treatment.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- Fever greater than 100.5° occurs.
- Discomfort and other symptoms don't improve in 48 hours.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.
- Abdominal, flank (side) or low back pain.
- Symptoms recur after treatment.
- Blood appears in the urine.

Student Health Center

WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.



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Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.